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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5290
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 8460
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1246
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ OCT 9741
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 6693
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 2566
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 7380
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4663

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003928

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: INDIGENOUS AND URIBE FAIL TO MEET

REF: BOGOTA 3829

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer
For Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

[11.](#) (C) President Uribe and indigenous protesters exchanged accusations of bad faith after they failed to meet in Cali to address indigenous concerns. The meeting was scheduled after 30,000 indigenous protesters marched from northern Cauca to Cali to press their demands for land, investigations into the deaths of indigenous members, and GOC concessions on a range of issues including the Colombia-U.S. Trade Promotion Agreement. The sides are now discussing a possible Uribe-indigenous meeting on November 2 in Cauca, but the site and format remain in dispute. Meanwhile, the indigenous leaders continue to denounce alleged brutality by GOC security forces. Colombian National Police (CNP) Commander Naranjo told us he was surprised by the level of violence and logistical capacity of the protesters. End Summary.

DEMANDS INCREASE

[12.](#) (U) On October 20, National Indigenous Organization (ONIC) President Luis Fernando Arias convoked over 12,000 indigenous from Cauca to participate in an eight-day march from Popayan to Cali. The march gained steam as more supporters joined in and the list of demands grew beyond the initial land complaints of northern Cauca. ONIC demanded a meeting with President Uribe--not ministers--and outlined a five-point agenda. They called for the GOC to comply with land restitution agreements, reject the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, repeal the mining and water laws, sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous, and put an end to Plan Colombia and the GOC's democratic security policy. The protesters numbered over 30,000 by the time they reached Cali on October 25.

STILL NO URIBE MEETING

[13.](#) (C) Despite Uribe's decision to travel to Cali to meet with the protesters, the two sides did not, in fact, meet on October 26. ONIC officials said President Uribe arrived "too late" for their scheduled meeting in downtown Cali, so they left. GOC MOIJ Indigenous Directorate head Pedro Posada told us the President waited for indigenous leaders at an agreed-upon television studio, citing security concerns downtown. After waiting for hours and dealing with the FARC-hostage escape of former Colombian Congressman Oscar

Lizcano, Uribe was informed the indigenous would not come to the studio. He then went to the downtown site, where he engaged in an acrimonious exchange with the few indigenous remaining. Presidential Communications Director Jorge Eastman told us the meeting site issue became a "political power struggle" between the GOC and the indigenous.

¶4. (U) ONIC leaders told us the indigenous would march to Bogota if the President did not meet with them on their terms. Still, at a contentious, eight-hour long, general assembly at a Cali stadium on October 27, the indigenous decided to return to Cauca and offered to meet Uribe at La Maria indigenous reservation, the location of the initial protests near the Pan-American Highway. Uribe requested the meeting be held in Popayan, and has not yet decided whether to accept the La Maria site.

VIOLENT CLASHES, FARC INFILTRATION REMAIN CONCERNS

¶5. (C) UNHCHR Representative Javier Hernandez told us the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squad of the National Police (ESMAD) has used excessive force against the indigenous, noting CNN footage that shows a masked police officer firing shots into the crowd during a protest near La Maria indigenous reserve. ONIC International Representative Joann Washington claimed over half of the injured indigenous suffered bullet wounds. Hernandez also noted evidence of police wielding machetes. Hernandez added that the indigenous have also used improvised explosive devices, rocks, and machetes. Human rights group Witness for Peace told us the most violent attacks by the indigenous were coordinated by infiltrated FARC members, noting the majority of the protesters do not support the FARC.

¶6. (C) CNP Commander General Naranjo said he was "embarrassed" by the CNN footage, but claimed medical examiner reports prove three dead indigenous died from shrapnel from their own explosives, not from gunshot wounds. He told us the CNP has found large quantities of explosive material as well as homemade mortars in the communities. One CNP official lost his hands when explosive materials he picked up from the indigenous exploded. Naranjo noted radio intercepts that show the FARC's 6th Front has tried to incite violence, and said the DAS is looking into reports of foreign "agitators." Calderas indigenous reserve governor Daniel Pinacue--who demobilized from the M-19 and indigenous terrorist group Quintin Lame in 1991--noted he was under investigation but denied any involvement in inciting indigenous violence.

BROWNFIELD